

VZCZCXRO5930  
OO RUEHDBU  
DE RUEHNO #0113/01 0541207  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 231207Z FEB 07  
FM USMISSION USNATO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0521  
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY 0078  
RHIPAAA/USCINCCENT FWD PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 USNATO 000113

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/15/2017

TAGS: [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [REL](#) [PTER](#) [QA](#) [XF](#)

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON NATO-QATAR TALKS ON STATUS OF ISAF  
PERSONNEL AND ENGAGEMENT

REF: 2006 NATO 731

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Richard Olson, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: High level discussions between Qatar's military and NATO on the future of ISAF's support to the Coalition Air Operations Center (CAOC) at al-Udeid Airbase in Qatar are back on track after a number of miscommunications. However, the overall prospect for this dialogue is still fragile. Most strikingly, Qatar had hoped for a NATO security guarantee, which is not an option for a nation that is not a member of the Alliance. Qatar seeks to place NATO/ISAF personnel under the jurisdiction of the State of Qatar. MFA officials have told NATO and U.S. officials that the ISAF Air Operations pose a risk to Qatar, and complain that NATO has been unresponsive to Qatar's proposals for a broad framework of cooperation. See possible way forward, para 9. See SACEUR Letter para 13. End Summary.

#### CURRENT NATO-QATAR ISSUES

-----

¶2. (C) NATO D/ASG Simmons went to Doha February 1-5 on an urgent basis after NATO's military interlocutor in Doha, Brigadier General Abdullah Jumad al-Hamad, threatened to expel ISAF personnel by February 25, should NATO not recognize Qatar's jurisdiction over ISAF personnel. Al-Hamad wanted a list of names of the ISAF personnel, their nationalities and a description of their ISAF responsibilities.

¶3. (C) While in Doha, Simmons also met with Deputy Foreign Minister for Follow-up Affairs al-Rumeihi. Al-Rumeihi said Qatar is looking to have good relations with NATO, including a broad framework agreement that goes beyond personnel at the CAOC and, preferably, from Qatar's point of view, would include some form of NATO security guarantee for Qatar. (Comment: Allies internally have made clear that no security guarantee is on the table, but have offered that Allied expression of "interest" in Qatari sovereignty, per policy with other Partners as a possible basis for further discussion. Simmons laid this out to Qataris early in February. End Comment). Al-Rumeihi nevertheless added his view that: 1) NATO had not engaged Qatar adequately in the past; 2) Qatar had never formally been notified of the ISAF activities conducted from al-Udeid Airbase and 3) NATO had never formally responded to written Qatari draft proposals for broad cooperation submitted by al-Hamad during earlier legal discussions on a transit/status arrangement. (Comment: This last point appears true. The proposal languished for nearly one year within the Office of the NATO Legal Advisor and did not surface until Simmons was assigned to take over

the Qatar dossier in January 2007. Allied delegations have not officially seen this Qatari proposal. End comment.) Qatar's proposed framework agreement reportedly would have included military to military cooperation, training and exercises, ship visits, sharing of classified information, the option for NATO to build facilities at al-Udeid Airbase and military sports. Al-Rumeihi and al-Hamad also orally proposed to Simmons that NATO should guarantee Qatar's security.

¶4. (C) Al-Rumeihi also told Simmons on February 5 that ISAF's presence in Qatar increased the country's risk of Al Qaeda attack. He said Qatar may be willing to support other Allied operations but Qatar would be vulnerable to retaliation if any of the NATO powers were to attack Iran's facilities. Al-Rumeihi said Qatar needed incentives for allowing NATO to continue operating at the CAOC.

#### WAY FORWARD

¶5. (C) Simmons reports that he proposed a way forward that was acceptable to the GOQ on February 5: 1) SACEUR would submit a letter explaining the presence of the ISAF personnel at the CAOC; 2) notification by concerned countries to Qatar on an interim basis of national military personnel currently carrying out ISAF functions at al-Udeid Airbase; and 3) NATO International Staff response to Qatar's proposals for a comprehensive cooperation program.

¶6. (C) The GOQ is now reviewing NATO proposals for a Lines of Communication (LOC) agreement that will address NATO's interest in regional security, territorial integrity and the sovereignty of the State of Qatar and propose practical

USNATO 00000113 002 OF 004

cooperation based on the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) Menu of Practical Activities. The LOC, however, would be narrower in scope than the broad framework agreement proposed by Qatar. In particular, it does not contain the security guarantee that Qatar had sought. (Note: a security guarantee is a complete non-starter.) NATO has proposed to resume the discussions in Brussels on March 5.

¶7. (C) Simmons reports that Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Hamad bin Ali al-Atiyeh and al-Hamad have indicated to him that they are now satisfied with the way forward and the process of consultation and negotiation since his visit to Qatar. They were also pleased to receive a letter from SACEUR informing Qatar that the CAOC would be used to support ISAF and that Allies represented at the CAOC sought to work with the GOQ to resolve the jurisdiction issue under the respective bilateral agreements. (see para 13).

¶8. (C) In spite of a general NATO-Qatar agreement on the way forward, U.S. Embassy Doha reports that al-Rumeihi was personally antagonized by SACEUR's letter (para 13). Al-Rumeihi did not like SACEUR's assertion that jurisdiction of ISAF personnel was a matter of Allies' bilateral agreements with Qatar. Moreover, al-Rumeihi inferred that even if he should accept that ISAF personnel were to be under the jurisdiction of Allies' bilateral defense agreements with Qatar, he wanted to know their names. He did not understand why the U.S. would not furnish the names of its personnel attached to the ISAF mission at the CAOC (U.K., FR, NL, CA all have or will provide the GOQ with names of their ISAF personnel in Qatar). Embassy Doha also reported that Qatar is most upset with the French presence. Qatar understands that France is outside of NATO's unified military command and therefore it is unclear how the French relate to the ISAF mission. The GOQ also wants to know what the French are doing within a separate building at the CAOC.

#### QATAR WANTS REGIONAL CENTER

¶9. (C) Qatar's embassy in Brussels confirmed that al-Rumeihi

also is responsible for heading Qatar's effort to win support for its hosting of the NATO Security Cooperation Center. Qatar delivered a Note Verbale to NATO on 22 December 2006 reaffirming an offer 12 months previous to host and support a NATO MD and ICI SCC. The note verbale also offered to kick off the NATO Training and Cooperation Initiative by hosting two NATO courses at Qatar's national military training facility in 2007. On February 5, 2007 Qatar's Ambassador in Brussels repeated the offer to fund a future NATO SCC if it were to be established in Qatar. The offer was made during an informal luncheon of MD and ICI and PermReps from the U.S., Spain, Norway as well as the Italian Charge d' Affaires. Any response to Qatar (or U.S. preferred candidate Jordan) is pending a future decision by Allies that will be based in part on an ongoing Training Needs Assessment. The SCC is to be a part of the NATO Training Cooperation Initiative, which was decided upon by Allies at the November 2006 Riga NATO Summit.

¶10. (C) A meeting previously agreed for February 15 in the context of regularly scheduled NATO - ICI country consultations between Qatar's Ambassador al-Dosari and NATO Allies is being rescheduled at the request of the Qatari Ambassador. The postponement may have been related to Qatar's difficult relations with NATO on the status of NATO/ISAF personnel at the CAOC and more broadly on negotiations about Qatar's cooperation with NATO. (Comment: Another possible reason for the postponement is that Qatar is awaiting Belgium's accreditation of its first defense attache, who would will be responsible for the NATO dossier. Al-Dosari wanted the DATT to participate in the 26 plus 1 meeting. End Comment.)

#### NEXT STEPS

-----

¶11. (C) Simmons will meet with al-Hamad in Brussels on March 5-6 to discuss the cooperation proposal. He is confident that the GOQ understands that NATO security guarantees are only possible for signatories of the Washington Treaty. Simmons said Doha may be mollified with a mutually acceptable outcome on jurisdiction and the LOC agreement.

#### COMMENT

USNATO 00000113 003 OF 004

-----

¶12. (C) NATO's discussions with Qatar to date have been plagued both by the NATO Legal Advisor's incompetence and International Staff stovepiping as well as by mixed signals from differing Qatari interlocutors. Only in January 2007 did NATO put the talks on a solid staff footing. Al-Rumeihi's argument about risk and incentives seems to be posturing. We defer to Embassy Doha on Qatari motivations, but wonder how ISAF's presence at the CAOC would expose Qatar to more risk than what already may exist from the much larger U.S. and Coalition presence at al-Udeid. While the GOQ would like to have the symbolism of a NATO security guarantee, they consider the U.S. on a bilateral basis, the principal security provider. It is clear that al-Rumeihi and others remain irritated at NATO's perceived lack of response to Qatar's proposals and NATO's establishment of an ISAF presence in Qatar without its formal agreement. It seems likely that the GOQ seeks the symbolism of a broad cooperation agreement with NATO. Qatar is also clearly signaling its interest in hosting a NATO-supported Security Cooperation Center.

#### SACEUR LETTER

-----

¶13. (SBU) Attachment:

SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER EUROPE  
SHAPE BELGIUM

9 February 2007

Major General Hamad bin All AL-ATIYEH Chief of Staff of the  
Qatar Armed Forces Doha

Dear General AI-Atiyeh

Thank you once again for the warm hospitality during my recent visit, and also for the support and cooperation that the State of Qatar has provided to facilitate the efforts of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. I would like to follow up on our earlier discussions, and those of the NATO team led by Ambassador Simmons that just visited.

As you know, a number of personnel provided by NATO member states have been acting as the liaison element for ISAF HQ in Kabul and are conducting ISAF air command and control functions within the United States Central Command Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) at al-Udeid Airbase. This element is called the ISAF Detachment to CENTAF CAOC (IDCC).

I would like to provide you with some additional information about the activities of these personnel. In accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1659(2006), the last months have seen the expansion of the NATO-led ISAF mission throughout Afghanistan. This expansion of the ISAF mission has been accompanied by changes to the command and control structures to achieve the long-standing military principle of unity of effort. Within this process, there has been a requirement to streamline the command and control requirements for air operations to ensure that ISAF and coalition forces are well supported. For this reason a limited number of positions have been identified within the CAOC to be filled by military personnel from individual NATO countries that have existing bilateral agreements with the Government of Qatar.

I understand that negotiations regarding an agreement between the State of Qatar and NATO have been re-energized within the last few days, and that there now appears to be a clear work plan which will allow us to take this issue forward. In the meantime, I hope that you will agree that it would not be in the best interests of the wider effort of the International Community to disrupt the operations that are being conducted by NATO in Afghanistan. I would therefore like to formally request that the ISAF functions currently being undertaken within the Combined Air Operations Center at al-Udeid Airbase by the IDCC are allowed to continue for a further six months pending the conclusion of the agreement. In addition, I will recommend the Secretary General invite those NATO countries represented in the IDCC to work with you under their respective bilateral agreements and arrangements to meet your concerns. Thank you again for your support in this important matter, and I look forward to the next time that we are able to meet together.  
Yours sincerely

USNATO 00000113 004 OF 004

Bantz J. Craddock  
General U.S. Army  
OLSON